

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: JCC, UR, US

SUBJ: SOVIETS REJECT PROPOSED DATES FOR COMMERCIAL COMMISSION
MEETING

REF: A) STATE 241137, B) MOSCOW 15672

1. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (ZINOV'YEV, CHIEF OF AMERICAN COUNTRIES DEPARTMENT) INFORMED US OCTOBER 18 THAT SOVIET SIDE COULD NOT ACCEPT DATES PROPOSED BY U.S. FOR NEXT MEETING OF JOINT COMMERCIAL COMMISSION IN WASHINGTON. ZINOV'YEV STATED THAT THIS DECISION HAD ALREADY BEEN CONVEYED TO USG BY SOVIET EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON.

2. ZINOV'YEV STATED THAT MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE PATOLICHEV HAD BEEN PRECLUDED FROM PARTICIPATING BECAUSE HIS SCHEDULE WAS "PACKED". HE MENTIONED UPCOMING SESSION WITH CANADIANS WHICH BEGINS NEXT WEEK. SIMILARLY IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO HOLD EXPERTS MEETING AS US PROPOSED BECAUSE DEPUTY MINISTER MANZHULO WAS FULLY OCCUPIED WITH MEETINGS SCHEDULED AS MUCH AS SIX MONTHS IN ADVANCE. ZINOV'YEV REFERRED TO ONGOING TALKS WITH MEXICANS HERE AS EXAMPLE OF MANZHULO'S TIGHT SCHEDULE.

3. IN ABSENCE OF ANY ADDITIONAL SOVIET COMMENT, WE ARE OBLIGED TO SPECULATE. AS EARLY AS OCTOBER 4 MEETING BETWEEN MANZHULO AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE ARTHUR DOWNEY, SOVIETS HAD BEEN SHOWING RELUCTANCE TO DISCUSS MEETING OF COMMISSION. MANZHULO HAD BEEN QUITE NON-COMMITTAL ON SUBJECT, MENTIONING PREPARATIONS FOR CANADIANS,

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WHILE ASSOCIATES QUESTIONED WHETHER PROPOSED DATE WAS

OPPORTUNE. IN MEETING OCTOBER 11 BETWEEN DOWNEY AND DEPUTY MINISTER SUSHKOV, LATTER APPEARED TO SHOW PREFERENCE FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER MEETING OF US/SOVIET TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL, WHERE HE IS SCHEDULED TO SPEAK. WE ASSUME THAT SOVIETS MAY HAVE HAD A GENUINELY DIFFICULT TIME DECIDING ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT U.S. PROPOSED DATES. THEIR DELAY IN RESPONSE MAY BE A REFLECTION OF CONCERN THAT REJECTION OF DATES COULD HAVE SOME NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. THEY MAY FEEL THAT PROXIMITY OF COUNCIL MEETING, WITH LIKELY GLITTERING ARRAY OF U.S. GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS PERSONALITIES ASSEMBLING IN MOSCOW, WILL ENABLE THEM TO ESCAPE WHATEVER ADVERSE FALLOUT THE FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF COMMISSION MEETING MIGHT HAVE.

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